

MDC ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH YALE ON COVID-19 WASTEWATER STUDY

Wastewater analysis an early detection system for COVID-19

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For Immediate Release

(HARTFORD, CT) – The Metropolitan District (MDC) announced today a partnership with Yale University on a study to monitor the presence of COVID-19 in the wastewater of the greater Hartford Region in order to assist in identifying advance warning of potential outbreaks.

Earlier this year, Yale initiated a wastewater surveillance program in response to the pandemic with other municipal wastewater treatment facilities. Testing for COVID-19 presence in wastewater can help predict outbreaks up to a week before they are detected by regular testing.

The study will be based on samples of wastewater collected from the MDC’s Hartford Water Pollution Control Facility (HWCPF). Located on Brainard Road, the HWPCF is the largest wastewater treatment facility in Connecticut and serves the City of Hartford as well as the towns of West Hartford, Newington, Bloomfield and part of Wethersfield.

“The MDC is excited about the opportunity to partner with Yale in order to provide our public health officials with additional data to recognize COVID-19 cases and plan accordingly,” said MDC CEO Scott Jellison. MDC employees have quietly gone about their business keeping essential water and wastewater services flowing during the pandemic. We hope this partnership with Yale expertise will give officials yet another tool to help fight the virus.”

Yale researchers have been sampling New Haven-area wastewater treatment plants since March, and have consistently found that the increases and decreases in sewage sludge virus concentration predicted the results reported by individual testing with a lead time of around five days. Yale’s Jordan Peccia who has led the project, noted that this kind of an advance warning is critical information to help local and state officials contain outbreaks.

“With schools opening up and the State's lockdown easing, this is the time to catch an outbreak or spike in cases, if one is going to happen,” said Peccia, the Thomas E. Golden, Jr. Professor of Chemical & Environmental Engineering.

***About MDC:** The MDC is a nonprofit municipal corporation chartered by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1929. The MDC provides water, wastewater treatment and other services to its member towns: Bloomfield, East Hartford, Hartford, Newington, Rocky Hill, West Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor. In addition, the District supplies treated water to portions of Glastonbury, South Windsor, Farmington, East Granby and Portland.*

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